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FROM AN INDIAN
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FROM AN INDIAN
COLLEGE

BY

JAMES GEORGE JENNINGS

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. L^{TD}

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1898

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TO
MR. BERNARD QUARITCH
A SMALL SIGN
OF
A DEEP GRATITUDE

ALLAHABAD, *November 1897*

000074

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FITTING SPEECH	ix
HEART'S DESIRE—	
I. HEAVEN IS TOO FAR	11
II. THE CALL OF LABOURERS	19
III. IN UNATTAINABLE AIR	25
IV. THE HANDS ARE STAINED	31
V. OUT OF HER HEART OF HOPE	39
VI. THEY, SORROWING, GATHERED WISDOM	47
VII. CLOUDS ON A WINDY DAY	55
VIII. SO THAT HE ERRED NOT OF DESIGN	63
IX. FRUITLESS IN THE PLOUGH-WAY	73
X. THE SUN, DREAMING OF OTHER THINGS	79
XI. THROUGH LISTENING HEAVENS	91
IOPAS	99
SONG	105
AFTER SADI	109

FITTING SPEECH

Harmony of blending thought and word—

Fairest gift to man, and oh how rare!

Power to tell the things the soul has heard

In her journeyings, and her hope to share!

Prophet-like are they whose thoughts compel

As a rushing wave the fitting speech

Onward with the wide resistless swell

Of the sea—and they alone may teach.

Unto few 'tis given even to know

What the soul is telling in the ear,

For her words unspoke like breezes flow,

Full of music that but few can hear.

Rarer still the heaven-born minstrelsy

That can trap some chance aërial strain,

Deep consoling in its mystery,

And can utter it to men again.

HEART'S DESIRE

HEAVEN IS TOO FAR

I

HEAVEN IS TOO FAR

You call her wife—and I—the laughing fiend
Sent her for sins to blast his bed and mar
His board ; she is some life of the beasts ill-screened
In fairest woman-flesh—such wives there are.
The more's the shame, for his necessity
Is still to love. Block up the fouler old
Source that still floods man's nature, yet will he
Seek love ; there's sweeter fount, and stream
twofold.

Blessèd is freedom, but 'tis more than most
 Of us can bear unqualified. The soul
 That's all unfettered, is, her anchor lost,
 A ship that drifts towards a leaping shoal
 Where foams despair. When zephyrs tilt the sails
 O'er waters musical, the heaven above
 Is friend sufficient to our want ; when gales
 Drive us to whitening shores, we need thee, love.

Heaven is too far, too vast, too oft obscured
 To win aught but a fearsome love from man
 For long, with most of us—there dwell, immured
 In peace-girt walls or poet-dreams, who can
 Reduce the deity into a form
 Material, and love him much the same
 As woman loves her hero. We have known storm,
 Know there is terror in living—and no shame

Is mine, for one, the far heaven seems to me

All infinite, and that I feel before

The changeless distance of its majesty

The isolation of my soul the more.

All the innumerable souls on earth

Are held at distance by that higher power—

Distant from heaven—strange from the day of birth

E'en to the mother, who her love may dower

Upon her son, yet never hold again

His heart in hers. Who yet so close has stood

To other's heart, he felt its bodily pain,

That all its ill were his, its good his good,

Its hunger his? None; it is isolate.

But true love comes so near her heart to press

Unto the grief, her answering throbs abate

Its keenest pains, though fate be loneliness.

We have no common language but for low
And gross necessities. Our souls must each
For needs higher than these still stammer slow
In the unintelligible accents of a speech
Peculiar to herself, and jar and grate
Her woes on unmoved ears—her best to win
But a maimed understanding ; separate
By a perpetual malady from her kin.

Each is a traveller in a desert, parched
With inextinguishable thirst, his eyes
Cast up to a red sun burning in the arched
Heavens of brass, the while he fainting cries
“ How long ! How long ! ” And the beloved is su
Another traveller, wailing her thirst
In alien accents, crossing paths ; the touch
Of a like death near to her shoulder ; cursed

In a dry land by the like tortures—dear

For pity that she bears a grief the pains
Of which are ours, and that she bears them near

To us in a lone world ; for since her chains
To torments are like ours, needs she must know

That ours are equal powers of suffering—each
Dear to the other for the pity, though

Each tells of sorrow in an alien speech.

The soul that knows its solitude must pine

For swifter end of it—and yet, O fate,

Grant that love's kindly fingers lie and twine

With ours, and we may dare thy end to wait.

THE CALL OF LABOURERS

II

THE CALL OF LABOURERS

THE surging of unnumbered worlds, and sigh
Of motion swinging to the outmost verge
Of the universe through dim immensity,
With rhythmical return—by night the surge
And sighing of the worlds in motion sound
Soft in mine ear. Stars with stars intertwine
The weaving of their courses, nor confound
Their golden pattern ; worlds with worlds combine

In rhythmèd movements through suspended skies.

Come listen to the music of the night !

Here, where the stars o'erhang us, list the sighs

They sigh, that none has read their mystery right.

Turn o'er the pages of old Time, and view

In long succession all the linkèd deeds

Of mingling races. On from old to new

The turning of the leaves—as page succeeds

Page after page, the finger turning still—

Sings to the pensive mind with ordered beat

Of days succeeding days, and days to fill

The measure of a season ; summer's heat

Pressing on winter, winter hastening on

To take the burthen of the growing years

At his fixed interval, till they have won

The goal of timeless time that hourly nears.

And as the leaves of Time's old volume fall,
Picturing dimly all the long-drawn deeds
Of man, they sing of endless birth. The call
Of labourers to their fellows, as succeeds
Stage unto stage of the growing work, and son
Takes up the labour where the father leaves
The labour, his allotted portion done
—The call of labourer to his fellow heaves,
Sighing at intervals above the hymn
Of Time's old volume singing of the deeds
Of man. Born unto labour, from the dim
Verges of time life after life succeeds.

Speak to me of the giver of the law
Binding the worlds in movement, to the surge
And sigh of mighty motion, as they draw
Towards the edge of the universe and urge

Their courses back through the far spaces, thick
 With rolling star-worlds moving orderly
In rhythmical return, as soft they pick
 Above our world—below—their way in the sky ;
—Binding the wheeling company of the years
 In revolution, winter on summer still
Pressing, summer swift away as winter nears ;
 And days succeeding days, and days to fill
The burthen of a season ;—speak to me
 Of him that breathed into the dual life
Lives other than its own, by mystery
 Of birth ever replenishing our hive
Of changing workers. Whose is this silent law
 Binding all things in motion, world, and years,
And birth—O thou wiser than I ! thine awe
 Greater than mine, thy fears less than my fears ?

IN UNATTAINABLE AIR

III

IN UNATTAINABLE AIR

MAN is man's enemy, and most in this,
That he belittles with unthrifty speech
All that is worthiest, stringing words amiss
Upon fair themes that, rightly spoke, might teach
The spirit to rise above her earthly way,
Where narrow things and daily dues intrude,
And mount the skies, and from the height survey
Heaven, and share the heavenly quietude.

Yet, sighing of the goad of speech inept

That bids the soul wearily drag the plough
Over a barren land, who has not stept

Forth in his turn, and bid the soul to bow
Her gallèd neck against the bruising yoke

Of words and words, holding to narrow things
And daily dues the spirit that, if she broke

Our bonds, might view heaven's self from soaring
wings?

Heaven is nearest in deep solitudes,

And nearest in the solitudes of the hills.

On sun-strewn paths threaded through climbing woods

We two have stood, and shared the rest that fills
The clouds at pause upon their high-held way,

To seek far lands below the widest bend
Of rounded earth, while peace in sunlight lay

On out-mapped plains, stretching to misty end

At a far distance dim as dreams descried.

—Floating in circles, whole abysses below

Our resting feet, the brown kite held his wide

Flight of still motions imperceptibly slow ;

—And rose afar, in unattainable air,

The Houses of the Snows, the old-time seat

Of the heathen gods of Hind ; and everywhere

The sound of lesser lives, sole music meet

To be accompanist of the breeze's song,

The while she wafts upon their high-held

way

To far-sought lands the sunny clouds along,

O'er wide-spread plains throughout the dreamy

day.

Heaven is nearest in deep solitude,

'Mid the eternal hills where silence lies,

Nor narrow things nor daily dues intrude,

Where all is still, and solemn thoughts arise.

Journeying home to our dear land of birth,
On the down-looking verge of her low hills,
Pray that the bosom of our mother earth
May, as the bosom of a mother stills
The sorrows of her children, so soothe ours,
Her children home returnèd for a space
—A little space of sparsely numbered hours—
Ah, hide upon the arms the down-pressed face !

Heaven dwells on earth within the solitudes
Of the eternal hills where silence dreams,
With chin on hand, the day away, and broods
From eve till morn in frosty moonlight gleams.
Look to the eternal hills where narrow things
And daily dues are not sole thoughts to rise,
Where holy silence to her maker sings ;
Look to the hills, and heaven shall kiss thine eyes !

THE HANDS ARE STAINED

IV

THE HANDS ARE STAINED

BEFORE the far cloud-gates by which man came
The way of the world, there crawls a form, his eyes
Turned to his long dim journeyings of shame,
Hitherward from forgotten boundaries,
That first he kept ; and as he crawls he smears
Earth with the daubings of his stained palms.
E'en as he moves his guilty course, his ears
Fill with the cry of carrion for alms

Of blood, that glut upon his wasted sin.

—And if he crawled not, but erect he came
Through the far gates of earth, his origin

Fragrant of heaven—that heaven he lost ; though
shame

Of a first sin still of his heavenly ways

Blot not the memory that once he reigned
Far elsewhere ; yet as he stands to gaze,

And sighs o'er that long way—the hands are
stained.

Peace ! Peace was slain ; and there Life spawned
her brood,

Dropping the horrors of her spotty seed
In wide pools of her blood—where Murder wooed
His mate upon a low-lain world—to breed,
In stuff congenial, into clammy life,
Cold to all brighter things, though hot to slay ;

And where it germinates, to croak of strife

That nought but draughts of new-spilled blood
may lay.

There seems no law beneficent, no rule

To bind men's deeds of wrath with bonds of love ;

All the vast universe of life to school

In learning of a milder will above.—

Yet all the stars, and oh ! the silent hills,

Sing to me songs pitched in a sweeter key

Of peace. The music of their praises fills

My heart, my world, my heaven, with harmony.

Hush ! who dare call the world a world of ill,

Where all but life serenely ordered lies ?

The sounds of strife our untuned ears may fill,

While peace is singing through the farthest skies.

To us within the circle of the strife

Vision is difficult, but viewed afar,
From heaven, how small may seem the realm of
life

That it should vaunt itself a world at war !

What was he musing—he, the quiet mind,
Viewing his toilless handiwork, the birth
Of the universe from atoms slow defined,
That gathered atoms to build the rounded earth
Slow born, revolving in its minor place

Of older heavens ; when all was sentient
Of law divine, and all were kin, and space
Was in the peace of one great government ?

What musing o'er the world, when life appeared
Unto the law of peace less dearly bound,
Bearing the treasure of own will—that feared
Her first untrammelled steps, yet slow has found

A rasher confidence and chosen her way

By dangerous paths? Say, shall she ever roam?

Ah hope, ah hope, not ever shall she stray—

All else at peace, but hers to err from home!

OUT OF HER HEART OF HOPE

V

OUT OF HER HEART OF HOPE

WHO fears his thoughts, that they are over-bold,
Shows impious distrust. No thought conceived
Of love is evil, though the impregnate mould
Of strangest learning that e'er man received
Into his brain gave birth ; or many time
Confuted heresy of the past, proclaimed
By buried ages for a deathly crime—
And so 'twas reverent it was foully named—

Or doctrine of far lands, to eastward taught,
 Dull cruel errors of an outstripped age.
 Truth were a measurement of right in thought
 Too iron for men ; love is the juster gage.

I will not fear he should contaminate
 A weakly soul—such as from pallid face
 Thrusts forth ill-humoured spots, and sickness'
 state
 Puts on, at echo of the hurried pace
 Of small disease by other doors—who bade
 Me view the world a vast experiment,
 Thus pictured. In a hand the world new made
 Lay small at rest, and power beneficent
 With wisdom gazing—less than absolute—
 Viewed atom to atom drawn with delicate
 Handling ; learned, by earlier tests, in suit
 Of elements, and skilled exact to mate

The suns and stars—but novice in life—a last
 Most tortuous experiment—whose end,
 Working in doubt, lies hid till time have passed
 And torn the filmy veil none else may rend.

Bid me conceive this vast experiment
 With torture of the writhing world and souls
 Of men, until the veil of time be rent ;
 I will not hate the hand that close controls
 My spirit to pain ; the ear that hears my cries,
 And yet relenting will not let me go ;
 For out of tears shall perfect knowledge rise,
 And of my pain the perfect soul shall grow.

But bid me not to see in man the child
 Of nameless sire, that got him on a day
 Of carelessness, and deems that birth defiled
 Demands a penance that the child must pay.

Tell me no red-shame lore of negligence,
Of vice-smeared origin, to vagrant end ;
Read me no craven rule that may dispense
With service that my soul of love would tend.

Out of her heart of hope spring must have cried
Unto the garden of the world, awoke
On the first dawn with kisses opening wide
The curtains of its eyes, when morning broke
First unto Eden-land. High heart the spring
Has ever held, and highest when the sun,
Returning from his night-long journeying,
Wherein he slumbering moved, has bright begun
His waking course, and calling from the edge
Of the east, first rouses up the spring's dear
love,
Our world. Then by her kisses as a pledge
Of constancy—yet ah ! that she will rove !—

And by her frolic and her wayward moods
 —One smile more glad than grief in all her sighs—
 The world grows young again. Spring cried to the buds
 And Eden blossomed, when the world oped its eyes.

Theirs is a duller picture ; wreathing mists
 The pigments, and the frame the outmost verge
 Of the mind's vision, till the eye desists
 For pain of gazing. Smokes rise, as earth would purge
 From her hot altars nascent sins of the world ;
 Her vast form stirs, and sighing gapes in the crust,
 Disclosing fires ; and by her breathing whirled
 High, as some furnace belched, the smokes are
 thrust
 A moment from the surface, and reveal
 Low steamy dales where breeds the primal form
 In tepid vapours ; whose long fingers steal
 Soft round the hills and grip the world in storm.

Sullen in backward places lingering,

By sloth unto the ancient pathways held,

Where yet ignobly it would lie, and cling

Unto low ways of ease ; and still compelled

To grudging steps by the old love of ease

That pricks it on to some small betterment ;

Seeking no loftier gain than quick release

From little ills ; though down its eyes be bent,

Life has a long slow upward journey ta'en.

Surely the delegate will has of divine

Some better part, deep in its nature lain,

Held of its birth, its tardy steps to incline

Upward to heaven. Surely the breath that filled

From his own life with life the inanimate clay,

With touching lips, out of his soul instilled

Into its will the instinct of the way.

THEY, SORROWING, GATHERED
WISDOM

VI

THEY, SORROWING, GATHERED
WISDOM

THEY, sorrowing, gathered wisdom of their sins,

But of the sins that ate their empire died,

The iron glory of whose ages dins

Still in the ear, echoing from tongues that cried

Loud of a rule to outlast the fettered world

Applauding them ; boasting eternal sway ;

As fat prosperity his glove had hurled

In time's bleared eyes and bid his wings to stay.

And thou, brave heart, that bidest in their throne,

And scan'st the realms of thy imperial sires

With stately eyes—shall they that love thee own

That thou must die, when thy white bosom tires

Too greatly of the innumerable woes

Of thy whole world? When thy great heart is worn

By length of pain to fear of petty blows,

Shall from thy clutching hands the crown be torn?

Chiefly thou bid'st in thy dear western isle,

That long is thine. Ah, surely Heaven condones

So dear a fault, that taught her lands to smile,

Glad of the violence that broke the thrones

Of lesser kings in her distracted clime,

And gave her thee to love!—for thou wert young,

Nor callèd yet to gravity by time,

Who since has honoured thee; and she has clung

E'er after to thy stronger sister-hand,

And kissed the fingers that once did her harm—

Chiefly thou bidest in that peaceful land,

Where the old heathen ocean lays his arm

Lovingly round the realm ; yet where the race

Of thy seafaring sons, that cannot stay

The vehemence of their Viking blood to chase

Fortune abroad over the long sea-way

That served their sires and links their souls to home,

How distant be their journeyings—where'er

The daring breed of thy strong sons may roam,

Thou, loving mother of us all, art there.

We know the fierce-eyed bearded lineaments,

The full-voiced laughter, and the deep-toned rage

When he is angered, that the caverns rents

Of shore and heavens, nor lives of men assuage ;—

We know the wind-rough visage of our sire,
Him whom thou weddedst in thy unsung youth,
E'er greatness won whispered thy heart aspire
To rule the world ; nor fear his form uncouth,
That thou lov'st still, spite of his heathen heart
Thine has outstripped ; and of his hero hand
And its hard schooling have we learned a part
Not all unworthy of our mother-land.

Yet, oh thou wisest of the imperial race,
And mother of us all ! could we but view
The serene beauty of thy steadfast face,
From thy calm eyes should we the boon renew
Thou gav'st us of thy godlike parentage,
And learn afresh, with loftier dignity
To play our part unto our destined age,
Than we may learn from the brave heathen sea.

Aye and for aye to burn a light that saves,
Hold up, nor tire, thy beacon to mankind
Over the night-ruled gulf of surly waves,
That they a haven for their sails may find !

Thou hast the privilege of the latest come,
The large advantage over all thy line
Of buried empires, that the garnered sum
Of all the teachings of their reigns is thine.
They, stumbling, gathered wisdom of their sin,
But by their errors are thy steps more sure ;
Death broke their reddened wrists, but thou shalt win
Time's strong alliance, while thy hands are pure.
Hast thou, daughter of fallen empires, learned
Blameless the wisdom that they erring gained,
Aye wear, nor fear, the diadem that turned
To death upon their brows who wore it stained.—

O mother of us all, if thou should'st die,

Where will thy hero sons, our fathers, rest,

That strew the quarters of the world, yet lie

— Death leading childhood back — within thy

breast?

CLOUDS ON A WINDY DAY



VII

CLOUDS ON A WINDY DAY

CLOUDS on a windy day that drives the wheels
Of myriad scouring chariots to seem
But one, so close their courses, nor reveals
But faint the distance how his maddened team,
The driver, flinging wide and loose the rein,
Urges to wilder gallop with his cries ;—
Clouds on a windy day scour o'er the plain
Of heaven, and sudden from the van outflies

A thinner streamer, where the cars are held
Less close compact, so headlong is the race ;
Till other streamer pass it by, compelled
To rein its steeds awhile at lesser pace.

They who among us men a moment lead,
Stretching our lesser paces to a stride
Of fuller life, to match their panting speed,
Or by the fear to lag behind ; and guide
Us on, are clouds upon a windy day,
Storming from out the foremost company ;
Yet swift o'erta'en upon their heady way,
Uncertain guides ; nor longer in our sky.

That from the stars some race of men more fair,
More late from heaven, who yet our loitering feet
Of earth outstripped long ages gone ; to bear
No more a burthen on our road, nor heat

Of lengthening plains ; climbing on easy height

Near the white fabled city of our hopes

—In happier dreams—of them some soul, more bright

Than all for mercy, from those easy slopes

Would turn him back again unto the plains

Where are our labours, our slow steps to lead,

By paths he knew ! Ah, could he dare the pains

Of that dread way again, our steps to heed ?

Grant him the throne of the earth, and weight his
brow

With heavy diadem of absolute power

He had not sought—how gladly would he bow

To yield its grief, should time's hands sign the hour

Of his release and bid man rise to bear

The weight of his own royalty !—nor hope

For milder sway than kings of earth may dare,

Nor softer hands to rule. He might not cope

With all the foulness of our ways by rule

Of love alone. His too to wield a scourge,

And tame the brute part of our souls and school

Them to submission. Screams of rage would
surge

Up to a heaven that gave so harsh a hand

To drive us on, and we all point to breech

In scorn of small legalities that stand

On ancient precedent ; scream, and beseech

Redress from high against a lawless sway

Would crush us into goodness. So should all

In name of right rebel ; and on a day

Of popular triumph would his empire fall.

And failing heroes, there is fear of lords

Of lesser natures, that should guide amiss.

Nor all our small intelligence affords

Us means indubitably plain 'twixt this

Or the other to distinguish ; lesser man

 Unsure, or hero heavenly taught to lead ;

Or king inspired, or him to lead the van

 Of movement down to ruin with headlong speed.

They who are noble by men's measurement

 Rise from the happier houses that endured

Long years of wider labour than have bent

 The necks of other father-lines. So strength

Grew fuller in the sons than to the sires ;

 And larger souls to bear the apportioned load,

And breathe of hope to other soul that tires,

 Or cavils at the pace, or doubts the road.

It is but by the wider exercise

 In all her duties that the soul shall large

To natural spaces all her boundaries.

 Then shall she reign o'er serene lands, and charge

Her higher self take up her liberty ;

And all her realm—the brute, the ill, expelled—
Draw on to heaven. Cramp not her wings, but free

Her, like the homing bird the hand has held
Long in captivity, and then has flung

At random in the air its path to find ;
That has a moment in wide circles hung,

Then home on glad wings that outvie the wind.

SO THAT HE ERRED NOT
OF DESIGN

VIII

SO THAT HE ERRED NOT
OF DESIGN

His gain to stir the deprecating hands
And wagging of the monitory beard ;
So that he erred not of design, nor stands
On dangerous ground to do what others feared,
To gain the eminence of a little wrong—
When nerveless hands are raised to deprecate
So strange a daring as will quit the throng
And tread a separate way ; when, animate

With need to prophesy, a palsied head

Weak-jointed with its trunk convulsive shakes
Out memory's jumbled store of fables, led

Up to the moral of the doom that takes
A fainter breath away—tales long delayed

With tremulous tedium of age, intent
To warm its blood with all the comfort rayed

From warnèd daring close on punishment—
So that he erred not of design ; but pressed
Into the lonely places of the soul

Upon the footsteps that seemed truth's, to rest
On firmest ground, beckoning to long-sought
goal ;

He that has journeyed in that lonely land

Where the far sun-smit curve of the world
reveals

No kin of man, and the hot wind-stirred sand
Retains no mark of human feet, and steals

All guidance from the tracks that led his way—

He that erroneous tenets so has held,

And stood alone a space ; and on a day

Has turned him home again, where truth has
dwelled,

While he has strayed, holds of his wanderings

A fuller wisdom than his soul in ease

Had learned of truth alone, and docile brings

A larger spirit to his teacher's knees.

Claim for a right in birth—nor stay to ask

Whence cometh right—a law benign, and writ

In little syllables, that so the task

To stutter of its wishing-well should sit

Not heavily on a raw intelligence.

Disclaim the low soiled lids that veil our eyes

And blear the glances they would hide, for sense

Of much misdome—that, secret, still must rise

Into their backward mirrors—for a spite

Cruelly done unto a thing disgraced

When seen ill-made, yet born possessed of right

That was not cancelled by a maker's haste.

And serene were the eyes of race begot

With growthless wisdom, largest at the birth ;

And broad and gravely browed the race—but not

The race of men, nor were their home our
earth.

I preach no leering slander of the street

That all are equally fouled, and shame avowed

And singing naked where her fellows meet

To make a market, and the head is bowed

But as convention for a lure as stale

As are her senses, not so blotched a skin

Shows openly as hidden shame would veil

With decent cloaks to wrap its rawness in.

I do not preach, since all are vile, go call

More vices to thee in the streets of shame.

We do but walk by falling, but who fall,

When they may stand, lie beastward, whence they
came.

—Wet in the moulding, from the humming wheel

Now whirling, whirling with a speed that stands
Still to the eye, till motion fail and reel,

Curling the edge of the disc, the potter's hands
Pluck deftly off the new-turned shape, and lay

It down with skill that knows and wards each risk
Of breakage or ill form, then swiftly weigh

Downward the nearer rim of the slowing disc,
And whirl it round until it sleeping stands

Still to the eye again—so moulds he through
His day. All things but life lie where the hands
Of heaven, wet in the moulding, laid them new.

Nor ever breakage nor ill form is there,

Nor bungling hand to pluck them from the wheel.
Life moulds herself, and crook'd and cracked must
bear—

She judges well—the weight of fortune's heel.

Who gave us will gave us the power to err ;

And though we curse the gift for gift unasked,
And, crying for lower ease, though we demur
To hold a boon that is but labour masked ;
Driving our feet where they but crave to rest,
Binding our limbs with bonds of liberty,
Cursing us only where all else is blessed—
The gift is given, nor can we lay it by.

The double duty of a noble creed

To God and other still a third involves,
Lesser—to self. And this our circle of need,
Ringing our world, around one task revolves.

Each thought is flame ; then lift it high to guide—

So far as guidance lies in vision obscure

Of man as leader, bear we all lamps, and wide

The low warm circle, though each flame unsure—

The delegate will back to the will that gave

Its feet to journeying—nor all alone—

Hope sways her brighter lamp ahead to save

And lead us wiser back, our will his own.

FRUITLESS IN THE PLOUGH-WAY

IX

FRUITLESS IN THE PLOUGH-WAY

YE great ones given to know the bird-sweet tongue,

That trill, ye know not why, in fountain-notes

Sweet welling, bubbling, gurgling, rippling flung

Free of the song-stocked columns of your throats ;

For joy, for sorrow, for life, for love new won,

For each emotion, single, mingled all ;

For that your souls are musical alone,

And being act, acting are musical—

Have ye no honoured place within my scheme,

Ye that, if ye were gone, the sun his rays

Would darken for grief of you, and clouds would
stream

For you and loss of sunshine song-lit days?

Ay, truly have ye. We too know not why,

And yet ye move our lesser hearts and thrill

And set a-ringing in fair harmony

The little strings, vibrating that were still;

Nor e'er had known how songs lay silent there,

As music in a new unfingered lute,

Had ye not sung unto the trembling air,

That smote the little strings, crying "Be not
mute!"

And so ye exercise our idling hearts;

And, though ye wot not, each emotion turns

—So by the power that your sweet song imparts—

Opening with flowers at morn, to the sun that
burns

Bright in the heaven, as it goes daily round,

In all the beauty stuffed within the seed ;

That, had your sun not shone, the barren ground

Would hold in husks, their beauty never freed.

Yet see ye give no notes to baser airs—

They are no syllables of the bird-sweet tongue

That, flinging up her song, her melody shares

With echoes soft of strings less sweetly strung ;

They are no fire that heaven's good traveller
brings

To draw the harvest from the husky grain—

That else who sows, to furrow vainly flings,

And else had fruitless in the plough-way lain ;

But heat to burst the shells of poisonous seeds
—Our souls the land, the sowers good and ill—
So all the field be marred with blowing weeds
That every breeze with floating harm shall fill.

Ye serve us if ye raise our eyes, to view
Things fairer than the things that bind our feet,
And bid us of the high sun heart renew,
Dull daily need, and narrow dues to meet.
Ye serve him if ye praise him, though ye praise
Of love that reasons not, but, seeing, sings
The loveliness that circles all our ways,
When duller eyes see but the uglier things.

THE SUN, DREAMING OF
OTHER THINGS

X

THE SUN, DREAMING OF
OTHER THINGS

THE sun, dreaming of other things, has hung
 Seeds on the branches twisted by the wind ;
The wind, dreaming of other things, has flung
 The seed abroad that, in its sun-ripe rind,
Holds all in small the forms and hues of bloom,
 And branch, foredrawn in changing tracery ;
And what it holds within its narrow room
 Is law to what or branch or bloom shall be.

Warping the measure of the tender stem,
Dyeing the blossomed branch, the wind and sky
Turn into forms and colours strange to them
The branch and bloom, by rules of fantasy.
Toy of the wind and sky, sun-ripened, hung
On swaying branches twisted by the wind,
The seed abroad by idle airs is flung,
And, if it may, a happy soil shall find.

Who that has viewed his worse or better deeds
But sees them rooted in a soil of lives
That were not his to order ; sprung of seeds
The wind, not he, laid where the sun contrives,
Not he, the breaking of the ripened shell,
And airward draws the tender life the wind,
Not he, bends to its blowing ill or well—
And deeper law, by him nor them designed ?

And has he powers? What powers but long derived

Through other lives that nature drained for him?

Or wisdom, but kind circumstance contrived

A school for learning, and gave him lamp to

trim

By night, and leisure days? Or vantage gained,

But others gave the means, impelled to gifts

By kindly nature, that has ever reigned

A sweet-faced queen in all their line, and lifts

The latest scion to her throne to kiss

Her tender majesty into his face,

That is a generous friend. Or lacks he this,

Then other vantage, held by no dear grace

Of friendship crowned with smiles; but grim, and

wrenched

From weaker hands, that feebler lines upraise,

Who ever in the struggling ages blenched

Before a fiercer eye and violent ways?

What part of heaven shines in his thoughtful eyes

But shone before in older eyes than his,

Drawing their beauty out of happy skies

He did not choose, though in his soul their
bliss ?

What gloom of hell lies in his face defiled,

His warpèd soul, and all-disordered mind,

But comes of woes some earlier wretch reviled,

And earlier still, and him to vileness bind ?

What nature has he is his own, not strained

Through lives innumerable, the residue

Or clean or filthy his, as heaven has deigned,

But foul or fair, all old—no drop is new.

What power is his to find the better way,

Or lead his fellows to a happier seat ?

Or if he find the path or if he stray,

He still but treads the steps of older feet.

Were time all present, 'twere conceivably free.

So should each moment rise new worlds, to fade
Out of all being as they 'gan to be,

Their being no longer than a flash displayed
A moment in an over-summered sky ;

So should their time be bonded with no past,
Their creatures bonded to no ancestry ;
And they were free, while that their world should
last.

Forbid that we be over-logical

To draw by reason to a desperate end ;
And for that it be reason, and that all
The premises right, nor even wish to amend
The drawing from them, to a consequence
More blessed or happy, can detect a flaw,
We bow to reason, though a subtler sense
Cry, "Not man's logic, but man's good be law."

Should soul of man, contained, grow to contain

The world containing it, the soul might view
New premises for her reasoning, and attain
By added premises conclusions new.

If none be free, the coward straitly bound

Unto his visionary villain fears,
His puddle blood the oozing of a ground
Others defiled, his ever-ready tears
Fed by long muddy conduits from the hearts
Of beaten ancestors—the liar, cheat,
The lurking thief, and them that tread the marts
Of England's thoroughfares by night with feet
Fouler than fallen filth they beat on, vile
Debauchers and debauched, that sap the life
And virtue of the state, and law the while
Stands fat and belted by ; them of the knife

That murder for small change, or hate, or lust,
And wipe the blade upon a sleeping hand
To mock the bleared eyes of the courts, and
trust

To sin unseen ; knaves to betray the land
Dear of all lands, the womb that bare, the breast
That suckled them, the mother-lips that won
Smiles from their tears, for moneyed ease to rest
After the labours of the villainy done.

Were liars, thieves, adulterers, murderers, all
Bound strictly each to his own villainy,
There were but brute in the deep tones that call
For justice to the wronged. Guilt ! All were
free

To wreck the world, and smirk for answer that
They had no will to do it. Duty, crime
Were silly words we long have babbled, pat
Like parrots, learning for a little time

After a silly month, with naught to do
But cram a brainless head with empty sound.
And sin were naught, and ill were naught to rue,
And effort were to till a barren ground.

If none be free, then true intelligence
Will pay no love to those large souls who set
Fair patterns to our eyes, and reverence
Become an ancient thing a man has met
Once by strange accident in backward mind
Hidden in a gaping village, like a phrase
Of perished tongue that peeping scholars find
With strange survivals of long-buried ways.
If none be free, then lies that inner voice—
Ah, she salutes evil and good by names
Differing in different creeds—yet ever choice
Betwixt them offers—lying then, she shames

Her priestess office when she bids us choose
Who have no choosing. Office none is hers,
Nor priestess she, but some odd tongue that loose
Hangs on a wire the passing breeze but stirs.

Are there two lords, and sentient life's a lord
So natured that he bound his slave in chains,
And drags him on through evil ways toward
No goal, no nearer—for the bond sustains
Him still—to love than at the starting-place?

Are there two lords, the lord of that is bound
In nature's happy bonds, to law, to peace,
A tenderer ruler than we men have found?
—If none be free, not one, never to choose,
To wrench from inner wrong the victory;
Brave heart, be thou still strong, nor still refuse
To strive, for love of higher than may be!

THROUGH LISTENING HEAVENS

To

*Sweet eyes that shall not see, and sweet ears that shall
not hear ; to little lives ended, since my
verses were written, in play-
days, and yet a service.*

XI

THROUGH LISTENING HEAVENS

NIGHT and sweet peace are here, most welcome peace

To the ear, the outpost of the campèd soul

Sojourning in hostile land. The moon her less

But fairer radiance—that they say she stole,

Though if she robbed the sun, her own deft skill

Made fairer what she stole—views in the night,

Her mirror, that she kisses for the part

It shows her of her loveliness and light.

The mother crooning rocks her child to rest ;

—Oh sleep, my child ! the moon shines in the
heaven ;

Low are her notes, and soft her mother-breast ;

—Oh sleep, my child ! for rest the night is given.

The dawn and joy are come, with promises

Of fairer beauty than our mortal day

Can bring. Fresh while the white-strewn dew yet lies

Come to the meadows, for it will not stay.

The mother smiling greets the baby cheeks ;

—Oh wake to laughter, wake ! high rides the sun ;

Soft are the arms her laughing baby seeks ;

—Oh wake to laughter, wake ! the day's begun.

Ah thou, death, thou they draw with hollow eyes,

Yet haply hast thou smiling mother-brows ;

And haply are thy words sweet lullabies,

Or daybreak kisses that from sleep arouse.

Or fair or foul, oh stand not thou beside

My bed to say, "Thy sands of life are run ;"

Oh come not thou, or fair or cavern-eyed,

Oh come not thou, ere sense of labour done.

I shall not know thee for a mother dear

If else thou come, my task nor done nor learned ;

I still thy chilly hand of bones must fear

If else thou come, my meed of rest unearned.

It ne'er were earned, nor e'er work well achieved,

Should'st thou delay for me the centuries ;

Yet work attempted that were well conceived

Were thing held sure where else all dubious
flees.

Or fair or foul, oh stand not thou beside

My bed to say, "Thy web of life is spun ;"

Oh come not thou, or fair or hollow-eyed,

Oh come not thou, ere sense of service done.

The rainbow hangs upon the clearing sky,
A curvèd ribbon on a sobbing breast,
When tears are passing o'er, and smiles are nigh,
That you so treated her, and have confessed
That you so treated her most ill. And where,
Where vanishing are tears, and sighs, and bow?
Tears, sighs, and bow have faded from the air ;
Yet, have they come, they cannot wholly go.

Who cried, "The soul is but a harmony ;
No longer may it sing than lives the lute ;
The lute is cracked, and laid neglected by,
And all its music is for ever mute" ?
Though webs will cover it, though worms may eat
The sounding-board and all the eloquent strings,
The lute but changes form ; the music sweet
Through countless listening heavens wends and
sings.

Sings, sings the music while the fingers strike
The golden fetters from her dancing feet ;
Rings, rings her step on airy pavements, like
A maid's the love she kissed but once to meet.

If truth be old, if none of truth be new,
For them that look into new things waits pain.
Death bringeth doubts, and doubts a lore may rue
That taught them wrong, and still may leave its
stain.

Thou hooded guide, who dares to take thy hand
And trust thy steps towards the parting veil,
Where—blind the stride—may lie or gulf or land,
Wrath, just as smiles, our advent there to hail?
Thick, thick the breath, and blind the straining eyes,
And dumb the porter that the curtain holds.
Ah, who may calmly step to fate that lies
Behind the thickness of the parting folds?

Ah thou, death, thou they draw with hollow eyes,

Yet haply hast thou smiling mother-brows.

Ah, haply are thy words sweet lullabies,

Or daybreak kisses that from sleep arouse.

Or fair or foul, oh stand not thou beside

My bed to say, "Thy web of life is spun ;"

Oh come not thou, or fair or cavern-eyed,

Oh come not thou, ere sense of labour done.

IOPAS

IOPAS

(ÆNEID, I. 740)

NEW moon, full moon, waxing and waning !

High thy lamp, the way by night showing.

Day's light, sun bright ! Man ever straining

O'er his work, looks up for thy going.

List his luting

—Gold his lyre—

Old Tyre's minstrel Iopas is hymning,

High saluting

Each bright fire ;

Bright the sun, but the moon's lamp e'er
dimming.

High his singing

—Sweet the air—

Dido's bard at new Carthage is hymning,

Backward flinging

His long hair.

Dido, Dido, thy fate beware !

Sings he now the rising of man

—Round man's homestead herds ever lowing—

How the race of mortals began,

Gods on them earth's lordship bestowing :

Whence heaven's waters,

Whence heaven's fire,

Both the Bears, and each bright constellation;

Atlas' daughters—

Tempests dire

Flow the tears of their long lamentation ;

Why so speeding

Winter's sun

Hastes to quit his heavenly station,

Never heeding

But to run

Back to Ocean, his course half done ;

What delays make long the night

—Sing, Iopas, Atlas' teaching

Why the dark steals from the light,

Shadowy hand through winter outreaching.

List his luting

—Troy's the gain ;

Dido's doom is to love unavailing—

Each note suiting

Strain to strain,

While the stars in the dawnlight are paling.

Long the praise

The music o'er ;

Tyrians, Trojans, him high poet hailing.

—To our days

Comes no such lore ;

Virgil, Virgil, oh tell us more.

SONG

SONG

EASILY down the flowing stream

I paddle, I paddle my light canoe ;

Down where the ripples idly gleam

In the reach we knew

When I rowed with you.

Summer has gone and summer come,

But you, love, but you, love, are far away ;

Lonely I list the ripples' hum

'Neath the purple ray

Of the dying day.

Changed is the burden of the strain,
It murmurs, it murmurs to me alone,
Telling of absence and of pain,
In a sighing tone,
As I pass alone.

Slowly adown the heavy stream
I paddle, I paddle my lone canoe,
Down where the waves no longer gleam
In the reach we knew
When I rowed with you.

AFTER SADI

AFTER SADI

I

KNOW you the East—its spreading dome of blue
Roofing the level earth to render it
One temple wide and radiant, with the due
Of day-long prayer more plainly urgent writ
Than on our narrower skies? Know you the hour
Of rest in Eastern day, when silence signs,
Bending her solemn brows, to kneel to power
Ordering the wandering earth in her confines?

—Within a garden stood a tomb endomed,
 With rounded roof to match the domèd sky
 Of the East. Here Sadi Sahib musing roamed,
 And to the shrine in deeper thought drew nigh.

“Handfuls of roses freshly plucked, and bound
 With grasses from its neighbouring garden brought,
 Sweet offering of reverence, I found
 Upon a cupola. So fragrance-fraught
 The roses bound with grass, rashly I cried,
 ‘Here’s common grass with fairest roses tied.
 How comes poor grass in noble company?’

“The grasses heard, and smiled to hear the scorn,
 And whispered, ‘Sadi! their nobility
 Spurns not old friends. Us beauties none adorn,
 Nor scent nor radiance the soul to fill,
 Yet are we from the roses’ garden still.’”

And Sadi, pondering the meek reply,
 Murmured, “Though graceless, from His garden I.”

II

A king of Araby in bygone days

Lay on a bed of pain ; for age had gripped
Him fast, nor hope remained that suave delays,
Time-honourèd expedient, might be slipped
Into a form of parley, with a foe

So old in war and policy. The king
Of Araby resigned waited the slow

And heavy advent of the gruesome thing
More terrible than pain, to ope the door

Of that still chamber where he lay. And while
He lay awaiting silently, once more

The throng of life intruded, with its smile
Fresh of the outer air. They ushered in

A horseman that had rode a sunny day,

Mile after sunny mile, to bring the din

Of victory to his ears and speed his way

To other realms with fit accompaniment.

The messenger to catch his answer bent :

“Take thou thy good news to mine enemy,

Mine heir. For me no news : time ne'er has
turned

To give again our frail humanity

The moments he has offered and we spurned.”

III

“ In far Bagdad ”—I do our Sadi wrong

To turn the verse that renders all he wills,
How simple be the theme, worthy of song—

To lowliest matters lending charm, as trills
Through level meads a singing rivulet—

“ A pennon and a curtain meeting spoke.

The pennon, weary of the road and fret

And dust of ridden way with soldier-folk,
Complained : ‘ Though thou and I, of one degree,
Are servants of the king, what other days
Are thine and mine ! From service never free,

In season, ay and out, on foreign ways

Or home, I'm on the tramp of constant war,

'Mid hardships thou not dream'st, siege, road and
dust !

In siege, on dusty road, I'm to the fore ;

Yet here forsooth to thee precedence must

By me be given. Thou'rt, lordling, palace-free,

And I, rude fellow, stay without. Thou keep'st
With ladies starry-eyed thy company ;

'Midst jasmine-scented maids thy senses steep'st.

In rough men's grip, in lands by war made bare,

With fettered foot and turning brain I fare.'

“The curtain answered—‘But I lowly bow

Unto the threshold of my King, and thou !

Thou lift'st thy head above the heads of all.

It is but pride necessitates a fall.’

Sadi is meek, and, meek, from care is free,

For none 'gainst lowliness does enmity.”

IV

Should wrong of enemy, should wrong of friend,

Work in thee grief, let grief in bitterness

Not rail against mankind. But this shall end

Thy soul's complaint : all griefs, all joys, that press
Into the mingled day of life arise

Not from our fellows, from an origin

Beyond the narrow range of mortal eyes,

Moulding our fated days ere they begin.

Although the arrow from the bow has ta'en

Its flight self-poised, and on a mounting wing

Outflies the quarry—not the shaft has slain

But he whose hand has strained and loosed the string.

V

Who has a bitter mind and cannot taste
 What good is his, for thought of greater ill,
Or greater good of other, fortune-graced—
 With sweeter food Sadi his soul shall fill.

Shall ye see one who schemes and scheming draws
 All his desires into a crowded hand,
While fails his starveling neighbour—little flaws
 Creep strangely in to spoil whate'er he's planned.

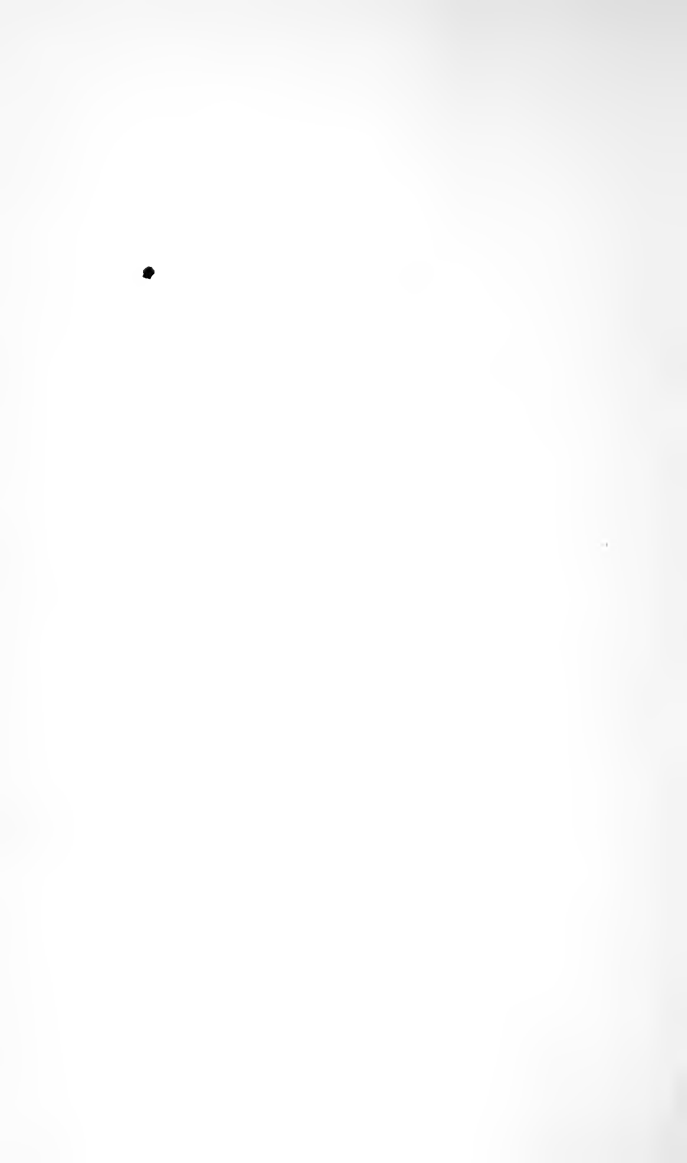
Let be ! How few the days to pass ere dust
 Shall nibble at the ever-scheming brain !
What difference in king or beggar thrust
 Each in the earth, earth to become again ?

The rifts 'twixt lordship and small service close

When fate that's writ takes back the rags and
sword.

Dig in their crumbled dust—who of ye knows

Which is the dust of mendicant or lord?







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